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ABSTRACT

A total of 900 teachers who had previously requested a free information kit on The Electric Company (TEC) received questionnaires to assess the impact of the kit on class utilization of the TEC series. Results (completion rate 30%) indicated that the kit's TEC Handbook was mentioned most often as being helpful in receiving TEC broadcasts. Among users, a majority indicated that the kit reinforced their desire to continue using the series and that they were making better use of the programs. Among non-users, about half had checked on the availability of TEC in their areas, and a similar number had tried to get a TV set for classroom use. In general, attitudes toward the kit were positive among both users and non-users. The data suggest that TEC utilization might be increased by finding ways to provide more TV sets for classroom use and to keep available sets in good repair, arranging better scheduling of the program, directing special efforts to school administrators, developing a means of letting teachers know in advance what programs will be aired on given dates, and providing more information to teachers about the supplementary materials available for use with TEC. (Author/CMV)

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# EFFECTS OF INFORMATION KITS ON TEACHER UTILIZATION OF THE ELECTRIC COMPANY

A survey conducted for

*Children's Television Workshop*

by

James W. Swinehart

March 1979

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"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

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## CONTENTS


| | Page |
|---|---|
| Summary | 1 |
| Introduction | 3 |
| Method | |
| Sampling | 3 |
| Questionnaire | 5 |
| Data Analysis | 5 |
| Findings | |
| Respondent Characteristics | 6 |
| Reactions to Materials in TEC Information Kit | 6 |
| Actions Related to Kit Materials | 8 |
| Use of TEC | 11 |
| Objections/Barriers to TEC Use | 14 |
| Additional Comments by Respondents | 19 |
| Conclusions and Recommendations | 21 |
| List of Tables | |
| Tables | |
| Appendices | |
| A. Cover Letter | |
| B. Reminder Card | |
| C. Questionnaire | |

# SUMMARY

## Background

In the May 1978 issue of Teacher and Instructor magazines, CTW placed full-page advertisements offering a free kit of information concerning The Electric Company (TEC). About 10,000 teachers requested the kit. In January of 1979, 900 of these teachers were sent questionnaires in an attempt to ascertain the impact of these materials on classroom utilization of the series. Sampling was based on TEC use data given on the kit request cards.

The sample included four groups: teachers who were using TEC in the classroom (N=300), non-users who had a TV set and could receive the TEC broadcasts (N=400), non-users who did not have a TV set but could receive TEC (N=100), and non-users who had a TV set but did not know if they could receive TEC (N=100). The questionnaire completion rates in the four groups were 40%, 27%, 28%, and 15% respectively. These rates do not include the 64 potential respondents who returned their questionnaires with the comment that they had not received the information kit.

Tables in the report present separately the responses of TEC users and non-users to items in the questionnaire.

## Findings

### Reactions to Kit Materials

The TEC Handbook was mentioned most often as being particularly helpful; the primary reason given was that it helped in planning viewing and follow-up of the programs. The Handbook was regarded as useful by about 85% of all respondents, and the "20 Questions" sheet by 68%.

### Actions Related to Kit Materials

Among TEC users, a majority indicated that the kit reinforced their desire to continue using TEC and that they were making better use of the programs. Among non-users, about half had checked about the availability of TEC in their areas and a similar number had tried to get a TV set for classroom use; one in five had considered using TEC but decided not to do so; and about one in ten reported that they had begun using TEC for the first time. About half of all respondents said they had conducted classroom activities suggested in the Handbook, and a third reported using the TEC curriculum goals in preparing lesson plans. Relatively few (about 1 in 7) said they had ordered TEC supplementary materials for classroom use. The materials mentioned most often as having been ordered were ditto masters and Activity Books.

After receiving the kit, respondents discussed TEC with other classroom teachers (61%), reading specialists (32%), and school administrators (36%). More TEC users than non-users reported receiving positive comments about the series, particularly from school administrators. In general, positive comments outnumbered negative ones by a large margin.

## Use of TEC

About 7% more teachers reported using TEC in the classroom at the time of the survey than when the magazine advertisements appeared, but some of this gain may have been produced by factors other than the information kit. Nine out of ten teachers using TEC said they had stratified reading groups, and most used TEC with all of these groups. Among those who used TEC in the classroom, the series was used daily by 53% and occasionally by 45%. About a third of users and non-users assigned students to watch TEC at home.

## Objections/Barriers to TEC Use

Nine-tenths of the non-users and half of the users checked at least one factor as limiting their use of TEC in the classroom. Scheduling problems were fairly common among both groups, and lack of a TV set was an important barrier for many non-users. A majority of non-users seemed to doubt the effectiveness of TEC; only 19% of this group felt that their students would achieve a higher end-of-year reading level with TEC than without it. A significant number of both users and non-users indicated that they felt teachers who use TEC spend more class time on reading than other teachers do.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Reactions to the kit materials were highly positive. A number of recipients reported using TEC for the first time or taking other instrumental actions, and many teachers indicated that their utilization of the programs had improved. Whether the advertisement and mailing of materials were cost-effective, however, remains a matter of judgment. A definitive answer would require a field experiment involving other methods of promoting utilization in matched or randomized samples of teachers, and such an experiment might well cost more than the promotional efforts themselves.

The data from this survey suggest that TEC utilization might be increased by: finding ways to provide more TV sets for classroom use and to keep available sets in good repair; arranging better scheduling of the programs (perhaps based on a survey of teachers to determine their preferred broadcast times); directing special efforts to school administrators; developing a means of letting teachers know in advance what programs will be aired on given dates; providing more information to teachers about the supplementary materials available for use with TEC; distributing testimonials from satisfied users to current non-users; and obtaining objective data regarding the amount of class time spent on reading by users vs. non-users, and (if favorable to TEC) circulating such data to prospective users of the series.

## INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth report relating to an effort by the Research Department of CTW to enhance in-school use of The Electric Company (TEC).

- Barriers to Classroom Use of The Electric Company, based on interviews with teachers and ITV personnel, was produced by Dr. Keith Mielke in May of 1977.

- In December of 1977 Patricia Hayes O'Donnell prepared a paper titled Strategies for Increasing Utilization of The Electric Company by Classroom Teachers. This led to an advertisement in one issue (May 1978) of Teacher and Instructor magazines offering materials pertaining to the series. Readers were provided with a prepaid card which they could use to request a kit containing "The Electric Company Handbook," "Who's Learning from The Electric Company--20 Frequently Asked Questions from Teachers," a list of names and addresses for information about TEC products, and a plastic carry-all bag.

- A report on the response to the two advertisements was prepared by Ms. O'Donnell in August of 1978.

The primary purpose of the present study was to ascertain the impact of the mail-out materials on classroom use of TEC. Survey design, sample selection, and questionnaire development took place in December 1978 and January 1979. Questionnaires were mailed to potential respondents on January 25; a reminder card was mailed five days later. The cut-off date for returned questionnaires was February 20.

Consultation on all aspects of the research was provided by Dr. Edward L. Palmer and Ms. Ann Hoffman of CTW. Dr. James W. Swinehart of the Public Communication Center directed the survey and prepared this report.

## METHOD

### Sampling

About half of the approximately 10,000 requests for TEC materials came through reader's service cards; the other half came directly to CTW through a coupon in the advertisements or an attached bounce-back card. A decision was made to sample only from the latter group because the cards and coupons provided more information on respondents--data concerning current TEC use, TV set availability, and TEC availability during school hours. The number of direct-response cards from each of the two magazines was large enough to permit adequate representation of readers without using the reader's service cards.

The 5,231 direct-response cards and coupons were divided into eleven groups on the basis of answers on the cards, as shown on the following page.

| | N |
|---|---|
| Current users of TEC | 2,150 * |
| Non-users of TEC | |
| Have TV and can get TEC | 1,891 * |
| Have TV but cannot get TEC | 198 |
| Do not have TV and cannot get TEC | 138 |
| Do not have TV but can get TEC | 249 * |
| Do not have TV and don't know if TEC is available | 98 |
| Don't know about availability of TV or of TEC | 33 |
| Don't know about availability of TV but can get TEC | 35 |
| Don't know about availability of TV and cannot get TEC | 7 |
| Have TV but don't know if TEC is available | 266 * |
| Don't know about current use of TEC | 166 |

The four groups starred above were regarded as of greatest interest for the purposes of the survey, and the others were excluded from further consideration. To obtain a pool of 900 potential respondents (20% of the four-group total), systematic sampling was done differentially for each subset to reach desired totals for the four groups. The pool size, sample, and returns for each group were as follows:

| | | Non-users of TEC | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Current users of TEC | Have TV, can get TEC | Have no TV, can get TEC | Have TV, DK if TEC available | Total |
| Universe | 2,150 | 1,891 | 249 | 266 | 5,231 |
| Questionnaires mailed | 300 | 400 | 100 | 100 | 900 |
| Questionnaires returned with comment that kit was not received | 20 | 27 | 8 | 9 | 64 |
| Questionnaires returned blank** | 5 | 10 | 0 | 2 | 17 |
| Returned undelivered | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| Completed questionnaires | 120 | 106 | 28 | 15 | 269 |
| Completion rate | 40% | 27% | 28% | 15% | 30% |

The actual completion rate was considerably lower than the anticipated rate (30% vs. approximately 50%), but this is explained in part by the unexpectedly large number of respondents (7% of the total) who returned their questionnaires with the comment that they had not received the materials requested. It is possible that other teachers who did not return questionnaires also did not receive the kits of TEC materials, although this cannot be determined from the data available.

**Changed assignments led some teachers to feel they should not participate.

Several techniques were used in an attempt to obtain a relatively high completion rate. Cover letters were individually signed, specified a date by which questionnaires were to be returned, and included an invitation for respondents to call CTW collect if they had questions about the survey. The questionnaires were brief and most items were answerable with a check-mark. The reminder cards were large (5" x 7") and their reverse side carried a color photograph of the TEC cast suitable for display in the classroom. Both the outgoing envelopes and the pre-addressed return envelopes were hand-stamped rather than metered.

## Questionnaire

Two drafts of a questionnaire were developed through meetings with CTW staff. The pre-final version was tested with several teachers in a suburban elementary school. In its final form the questionnaire was two pages long, and included four open-end items as well as 40 closed-end items. A copy is attached as Appendix C.

## Data Analysis

Keypunching and data processing were carried out by Datatab, Inc. Responses to all items were cross-tabulated by two variables: TEC utilization at the time the advertisements appeared (the four sample groups described above), and current use of TEC in the classroom (based on responses to Question 37). These two variables were also run against each other.

Tables 1-29 include row percentages as well as column percentages; Tables 30-47 present only column percentages. All tables include marginal totals in addition to breakdowns by categories within items. Since the "No answer" or "Not ascertained" category was not suppressed during computation, respondents who did not answer any given question are included in the base for percentages on that question.

One computer-generated index item, summing responses across Questions 1[illegible]3, appears in Table 47.

Most responses to the open-end questions were coded numerically and are presented in the tables. Other responses and volunteered comments were grouped by topic or content and appear verbatim in the text.

Percentages were used to provide comparability across groups of unequal size, and should not be regarded as implying a high level of precision. The findings presented here, as in any survey based on a limited sample, should be interpreted conservatively--particularly in view of the respondent self-selection inherent in a completion rate as low as 30%.

## FINDINGS

### Respondent Characteristics

Although characteristics of respondents are not "findings" in the usual sense, they are presented here as a background for the substantive results which follow.

Table 41 — Two-thirds of all respondents were regular classroom teachers, 17% were special education teachers, and 3% were reading specialists. At the time of the survey, 76% of TEC users and 58% of non-users were classroom teachers.

Table 42 — A slightly higher proportion of TEC users than non-users (24% vs. 18%) had been teaching less than four years. In both groups the most frequent response was 4-10 years of teaching (48% and 53%, respectively).

Table 43 — TEC users and non-users were quite similar with respect to the number of years since they had taken a formal reading course. The most common response (59%) was 0-3 years; 32% said 4-10 years, and only 7% said more than ten years. Only 2% of all respondents said they had not taken such a course, but an additional 1% did not answer this question and may belong in the same category.

Table 44 — TEC users and non-users were also similar in terms of the grades in which they taught reading. About a fourth (28%) of all respondents taught more than one grade. The largest proportions of single-grade teachers taught grades one, two, or three (18%, 14%, and 14% respectively).

Table 45 — Respondents were invited to furnish their name and telephone number on a voluntary basis if they were willing to be interviewed in a possible subsequent survey. Overall, 56% did so. The proportion of TEC users giving their name and phone number (63%) was somewhat higher than the proportion of non-users (50%).

### Reactions to Materials in TEC Information Kit

Table 1 — In response to a question as to whether any items or ideas in the kit were particularly helpful, the TEC Handbook was mentioned most often (33%). The reasons given were that it helped in planning viewing and follow-up of the programs (16%), it provided good ideas for teaching (5%), it suggested useful activities (5%), and it specified curriculum goals (3%). The information regarding supplementary materials was mentioned by 2% and the "20 Questions" sheet by 1%.

Although a slight majority (55%) did not answer this open-end question, a response was given by 53% of those who were using TEC in May of 1978 and by 38% of those who were not using it at that time.

Table 2 — Asked directly whether the TEC Handbook was useful, a large majority (88% of TEC users and 81% of non-users as of May 1978) answered affirmatively. Only 6% indicated that they did not find it useful.

Table 3 Overall, 68% of the respondents (70% of the May 1978 users and 66% of the non-users) indicated that they found the "20 Questions" information useful. About 15% responded negatively, and the additional 18% who did not reply to the question might belong in this category.

Comments Concerning Reactions to Kit Materials

"The activities in the back of the Handbook were quite useful. My class generally enjoys your program. It has proven to be very helpful."

"The Handbook was indeed useful to reinforce a particular reading, language arts, or spelling lesson. I check to see what is being shown--and how I can use it for reinforcement of what I am teaching. We make a game of remembering what is shown and what they can add to the lesson."

"Handbook provides program content so follow-up and preparation are easier and more effective."

"The list of products available and addresses of the company is great! Were we able to implement the program in our curriculum I would definitely be wanting the materials. The supplementary material description is good. I hope to obtain some of the materials to use as supplemental activities during free time in my classes next fall."

"TEC Handbook--a guide and help with learning of phonics."

"I am not able to have a television in my room. Therefore I used only some activities from the handbook as reinforcement work."

"The materials gave me some leadway to problems to work on! This is my first year teaching."

"The activity section of the handbook was useful. I would like more ideas since I have the same children year after year."

"The reminders in the kit were helpful. Everyone wanted to know where I got the great carrying bag! The kids wore it out!"

"The guide I was sent listing the skills taught on each show did not go along with the shows. The student workbook was too difficult for 2nd grade."

"My children are younger, but can get some help from TEC. I expected that the kit would have pictures & things in it. Also, unless you are a Channel 9 subscriber you don't know which number program is on on a particular day."

"The materials were used with a science unit."

"The list of supplementary materials was helpful. I would be more than willing to try TEC in my classroom but we do not receive a good picture on the TV set. I have used the Activity Books and have had good results."

"Entire kit was used in student/parent classes concerned & related with children's TV programs. I am an instructor in E.Ch.Ed. program. I teach adults working with preschoolers & toddlers."

"I used the KETV guide which included the same material as the handbook. However, I did use the activity section at the end of the handbook."

"I purchased some materials with my room money from a discount store that are CTW. The students never tire of them. I would be extremely interested in more materials by CTW and also in more ideas of how to further implement TEC into my teaching."

"I purchased TEC materials from Teachers Book Club."

"I have suggested parents buy TEC magazine to go along with show. Those who have done so didn't care for magazine, found it 'babyish.'"

"I have watched the program at home and bought the TEC guide book 2 through the Grade Teacher Book Club. My children were quite surprised with the dittos (reproduced) because they were familiar friends."

"Because we don't have a TV schedule available to us, explaining specific programs, the TEC handbook is not that useful. However, I feel it would be if we had a more complete schedule."

"I tried to follow the lesson plans but they didn't correlate with what was on the TV. I'd like to know in advance what areas are going to be covered on the program. I also didn't find the worksheets much help because by all of them following the same format the kids were bored with them after doing just a few."

Actions Related to Kit Materials

Tables 4-15, 31-33, and 37 cover actions which may have been prompted by the kit materials. Although the instructions for Questions 4-15 specified "actions you may have taken since receiving the kit," some respondents apparently reported actions taken earlier--for example, as when TEC users indicate having checked on the availability of TEC broadcasts. Thus not all of the effects reported are attributable to the kit materials.

It should also be noted that "use of TEC in the classroom" was interpreted rather broadly by some teachers in answering questions on the advertisement coupon or bounce-back card used to request the kit. As a result, the "current user" group under the heading of "Utilization Category" on the tables may include some teachers who assign students to watch TEC at home (or who use TEC curriculum goals, activities, and supplementary materials), as well as those whose students watch TEC in the classroom.

The summary on the following page presents separately the responses to questions intended for current users (as of May 1978), for non-users, and for both groups.

| Items | Percent Checking Item: Total (269) | Current users (120) | Non-users (149) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Items for Current Users** | | | |
| Q.9--I would probably have continued using TEC anyway and the kit reinforced my desire to do so. | | 63 | |
| Q.10--I am now making better use of TEC in teaching reading. | | 60 | |
| Q.11--I am now using TEC more frequently than before. | | 34 | |
| Q.8--I would probably have stopped using TEC, but the kit helped convince me to continue. | | 3 | |
| **Items for Non-users** | | | |
| Q.4--I have checked about the availability of TEC broadcasts in my area. | | | 53 |
| Q.5--I have tried to get a TV set for classroom use. | | | 49 |
| Q.6--I explored the possibility of using TEC but decided not to use it. | | | 19 |
| Q.7--I have begun using TEC for the first time. | | | 11 |
| **Items for Both Groups** | | | |
| Q.13--I have conducted classroom activities suggested in the TEC Handbook. | 51 | 58 | 45 |
| Q.12--I have used the curriculum goals in the TEC Handbook in preparing lesson plans. | 31 | 34 | 28 |
| Q.14--I have ordered TEC supplementary materials for classroom use. | 15 | 17 | 14 |

Tables 8-11 As shown above, a majority of users indicated that the kit reinforced their desire to continue using TEC and that they were making better use of the programs. One-third were using TEC more often. Very few had intended to stop using the series.

Tables 4-7 About half of the non-users had checked about the availability of TEC and a similar proportion had tried to get a TV set for classroom use. One in five had considered using TEC but decided against it. About one in ten indicated that they had begun using TEC for the first time.

Tables 12-14 A substantial number of non-users as well as users reported utilizing the classroom activities and curriculum goals in the TEC Handbook. A relatively small proportion of both groups had ordered TEC supplementary materials for classroom use.

## Use of TEC

Table 37 — Asked whether they currently use TEC in the classroom, 52% of all respondents checked "yes." This was 7% higher than the 45% who reported being users last summer. (Although 28% of the non-users at that time now claim to be using TEC in the classroom, the net gain is not that high because 18% of the May 1978 users said they are not currently using TEC. Some of these former users said they no longer have a TV set, or are no longer teaching grades for which TEC is appropriate.)

The apparent 7% gain in TEC use could be a result of many factors. Lacking a reference point, such as national trend data or use rates in a comparable group of teachers who did not receive the kit, the present data cannot demonstrate that the gain was produced by exposure to the kit materials.

Tables 38-39 — Of the teachers who said they currently used TEC in the classroom, almost all (89%) reported having stratified reading groups. Three-fourths indicated that TEC was used with all of these groups rather than only with some.

Table 40 — Among those who currently used TEC in the classroom, a slight majority (53%) said they used the series daily; 45% said they used it occasionally rather than on a daily basis.

Table 36 — Just over a third (37%) of those who were using TEC in the classroom at the time of the survey reported assigning students to watch the series at home. The proportion of non-classroom-users who assigned students to watch at home was only slightly lower (32%).

A number of teachers volunteered comments about their use of TEC and their reactions to the programs. These comments were often peripheral to the purposes of the survey, but are included here because they provide a context for interpreting other responses of major interest to CTW.

### Comments Concerning Use of TEC

"I have sent notes to parents about certain sounds you would present and suggested viewing for reinforcement."

"I use TEC for 11 year olds who read at level 3."

"I have found TEC very helpful and rewarding in my class. I have a TV in my class and use it daily."

"I like the reading games such as 'Slap, Clap, Snap,' 'Flip a Coin' and supermarket blends. I also want to order the ditto master book. I really enjoy the reinforcement it gives my students in blends, vocabulary, and structural analysis. The only problem is that the items included do not usually correspond with those I have taught that day or week in reading. I think ditto masters would help."

"TEC is only a small (but enjoyable, good reinforcement) part of my reading program."

"We have a TV in our classroom & we watch TEC faithfully. I feel TEC is a very beneficial program. I have been watching it with my class since the program began in our area. I have nothing but good comments for TEC."

"We think TEC has helped greatly in teaching reading to our first graders. (Two rooms share a TV set and watch it daily unless we have specials at that time.) The children love it and respond freely when they are blending sounds, etc. The program does a nice job of reinforcing what we do in the classroom! Keep up the good work!"

"I'm the librarian in a K-8 situation. We have 4 TV sets and a VTR machine. Our reading classes are scheduled with no TV time allowed in that time block. Thus I tape the program--show it to 4 grades in the a.m., 3 in the p.m., and have 3 other classes (E.H. etc.) view it live. This is done on a daily basis. This program is extremely popular with all the students even through the 8th grade. The catchy music, vivid color and the imagination of the writers present learning as an enjoyable object."

"My teammate and I think TEC is a terrific learning tool. Our first graders are virtually 'glued' to the TV. This is our second year of using it in the classroom. We begin watching it usually in January--as we feel it is too advanced for our class prior to that."

"I have found TEC very useful and enjoyable, with this class, this year. I am a strong believer in skills and have found these programs a great reinforcement for all my children. I have one particular child that has told me several times that TEC helped him remember certain skills. Out of 18 children I would say 18 children find it useful and enjoyable. Thanks!"

"I use TEC material for corrective work--stimulation!"

"I love your program. I used it extensively last year with very slow first graders. Their response was great. The show's fast pace, delightful repetitive sequences and WOW power kept the children involved. That's the secret: involvement. I feel TEC helped raise my children's scores. If I am again assigned with students who can benefit from your program it will be a central part of my plans. P.S. I like the program because it entertains me also."

"We viewed TEC at the university lab school, grades 1-2. It was very effective and we always used follow-up activities."

"We have a nice TV in this library. The teachers bring their classes in here to watch. We have the Activity Books 1 and 2. Teachers use the work sheets. Children like the program very much. We have Spanish, Black, and IndoChinese students."

"When I taught 2nd grade 1969-1973 I used TEC once a week as an independent enjoyable activity."

"TEC has really been great for my kids. It blends very well with the reading program I use. Keep up the good work!"

"We recently moved to a new building where no TV is available. However, we still walk to lunch in the central building where a TV is available. So a TV is available sometimes--depending on the weather. Also, we go to it; it doesn't come to us. I regret that I am unable to use TEC more frequently. I do try to 'sell' children and their parents on it and encourage my own children to participate. Keep up the good work!"

"I can't say enough about the program. As a teacher of EMR students, grades 1-5, TEC reaches all of my students. It reiterates the lessons I teach every day. All of my students need assistance with the concepts taught in TEC. The humor appeals not only to the students but to me as well. I find it very delightful to watch. I generally jot down the concepts taught and create a 20-minute blackboard exercise immediately following the program. Although Tues. and Thurs. repeat Mon. and Wed. shows, I find it beneficial to review what was previously taught via more blackboard and written exercises. Again, your show is a hit in our room and we would like to thank you for the work and thought that goes into it."

"When I had a class of intermediate students a few years ago, they all watched TEC at home and we discussed it in class the next day. It did help these children with their reading. I feel that TEC helped them because of the constant use of flashing the words on the screen. The children saw the word and the action and they had fun doing it, thus they remember it. They told me the next day, usually they had even learned how to spell the word in the short time they saw it, and I was able to expand on the meaning. I myself enjoy TEC and I know most of the older children (9-14) in our school enjoy it too." [Note: this teacher works in a school for deaf children.]

"I do not use it daily first semester with my first graders as I feel it is beyond their reading ability at that time. However, 2nd semester we use it daily.

I tried having just the lower group watch it for the additional reinforcement but the others felt like they were being punished because they didn't get to. So now all get to.

I believe TEC is an excellent program. Many of my students watch it at home as well as at school but they never tire of seeing and reseeing the episodes. The episodes are entertaining, fast-moving and at the same time educational.

We are fortunate in our area we can view TEC on 2 different channels at 2 different times. The first grade class (my class) view it at 9:00 on channel 9 and the 2nd grade view it at 10:30 on channel 8."

"I enjoy using TEC with some of my students (those near appropriate grade level) as a supplement to our reading program. The students tend to get very involved in the program and I believe it is truly beneficial to them."

"I am a reading specialist on the faculty at Hunter College. I have developed pre-service and in-service training for teachers utilizing your material. I find it quite good--very well prepared and effective."

"I enjoy using TEC. Children watch intently and the programs strengthen the phonetic rules taught in my workbooks. Spiderman and Letterman are favorite segments."

"I used TEC daily last year when I was a regular classroom teacher. The children responded well to the program and we all thank you."

"This year and last year I have used TEC as a listening center for individual reading groups."

"Since I can't get a TV in my classroom, I assign the children to watch TEC once a week. The next day, I give them a short 'quiz' on the stories. The children love the quizzes. I believe that many watch the show on their own, although they won't admit it!

However, because of various home situations, some are unable to watch the show. I am trying to get the TV in once a week, but at this time, it seems unlikely.

Although, initially, the students groaned when they heard 'Channel 13' ('My TV doesn't get 13 in our area!') they have now accepted, and look forward to, the assignments."

"I feel TEC is FANTASTIC! I have a class of excellent readers (majority) to not so good and everyone including myself loves watching. We watch every day at 12:30. Your sense of humor and satire is great! Their favorite is Spidey Man and their least favorite is Letter-Man. They sing along and interact with the program. For my students who are already good readers they love the humor, music, singing, etc. For my other students who have reading difficulty it has helped! They enjoy it also, but have gained in their ability also. One of the biggest helps to me is contractions and possessives. Thanks for all you're doing!"

"I am a reading resource teacher. I recommend TEC for children's home viewing. Parents have had difficulty getting it on TV (supposed to be 5 p.m. on ch. 10 but parents claim difficulty)."

## Objections/Barriers to TEC Use

Questionnaire items 16-28 concerned various factors that may limit the use of TEC in the classroom. The number of items checked per respondent ranged from zero to 5, with the following distribution:

| Number of items checked | Percent of respondents |
|---|---|
| 0 | 29 |
| 1 | 38 |
| 2 | 20 |
| 3 | 10 |
| 4 | 2 |
| 5 | - (less than 1/2 of 1%) |

Table 47 An "objections/barriers index" was used to summarize responses to this set of items in the questionnaire. Among all respondents, 68% checked one to three items and 3% checked four or five items. Not surprisingly, non-users of TEC noted one or more barriers or objections to use far more often than did users. Even among users, however, half of the teachers checked at least one factor as limiting their use of the programs. About nine-tenths of non-users did so.

Tables 16-28 The objections/barriers items were introduced in the questionnaire as follows: "A variety of factors may limit the use of TEC in the classroom. Please check any of the items below which describe your own feelings or situation." The individual items are listed below in descending order of response frequency for the total group.

| | Percent Checking Item | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Total (269) | May 1978 TEC users (120) | May 1978 TEC non-users (149) |
| Q.20--TEC is hard to schedule; it's not broadcast at the right times. | 31 | 28 | 34 |
| Q.24--No TV set is available for my classroom. | 21 | 4 | 34 |
| Q.25--A TV set is available but it is too difficult to obtain or schedule. | 15 | 8 | 20 |
| Q.17--TEC is not appropriate for the grade(s) I teach. | 14 | 6 | 21 |
| Q.26--I don't know what supplementary materials are available for use with TEC. | 10 | 13 | 8 |
| Q.23--We can't get a good picture on the channel that carries TEC. | 9 | 8 | 9 |
| Q.27--My school would tend to discourage the use of TEC. | 7 | 2 | 11 |
| Q.22--Students can watch TEC at home, so we don't need to take class time for it. | 6 | 5 | 7 |
| Q.18--The programs use too much ungrammatical English. | 5 | 3 | 7 |
| Q.21--The programs are too long. | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Q.28--There are other things I can do which produce better learning results in reading. | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Q.19--I don't like the style of humor in the programs. | * | 1 | 0 |
| Q.16--TEC takes the wrong approach to reading. | 0 | 0 | 0 |

* Less than 1/2 of 1%.

As the preceding table shows, TEC scheduling is a problem for many users as well as for non-users. Even if the programs were scheduled more conveniently, they could still not be used by the fairly large number of teachers who have no TV set or have difficulty obtaining one for classroom use.

Table 29 Respondents who checked item 28 ("There are other things I can do which produce better learning results in reading") were asked to explain this answer. Although three teachers checked the item, none offered a substantive explanation. The one possible exception was the first-grade teacher who said that personal attention was important in teaching.

Table 30 Question 30 ("Are there any other reasons why some teachers do not use TEC?") elicited few answers which did not duplicate the content of items 16-28. The problems mentioned most often were lack of a TV set, lack of time, and scheduling difficulties. A few respondents cited negative attitudes toward the use of television in schools, teacher characteristics (such as rigidity or resistance to new ideas), the fact that some teachers lack information about TEC, the high entertainment value of the programs ("a hard act to follow"), or unspecified problems with the programs themselves.

Table 34 On the assumption that a negative perception of TEC serves as a barrier to program use, Question 34 was intended to assess teachers' attitudes regarding the value of the series. A slight majority of respondents (59%) said they would aim for the same end-of-year reading level with or without using TEC. The expectation that students would achieve a higher reading level with TEC than without it was higher among users than among non-users (33% vs. 19%).

Table 35 Another possible barrier to TEC use is the belief that it requires the teacher to spend more time in teaching reading. A substantial minority (about 40% of users and 30% of non-users) indicated that they felt teachers who use TEC spend <u>more</u> class time on reading than other teachers do. Only 3% of all respondents felt that TEC users spend <u>less</u> time on reading. (Many non-users did not answer this question, presumably because they were not familiar with the experience of TEC users. Of the non-users who did answer the question, about 45% felt that TEC users spend more class time on reading and only 5% felt they spend less time.)

A number of teachers commented on barriers encountered with regard to use of TEC. These comments are reproduced below.

<u>Comments Concerning Barriers to Use of TEC</u>

"I view it often as my schedule permits, but I have to do a lot of rescheduling in order to fit it in--therefore we miss episodes."

"Some teachers feel that students watch too much TV already."

"Material was too advanced for first grade."

"It is very frustrating not being able to find any available TV set. TEC has some good ideas. It certainly livens up reading."

"The general opinion of the four first grade teachers in my school is that TEC is fantastic. We would use it daily if it were scheduled more conveniently for our situation. Nine o'clock is not a good time to stop all activity for the class to watch. Eight-thirty or ten-thirty would be better programming for us."

"For special class students, the material is too fast moving and the show too long; however, the students enjoy short segments of the material."

"By 3rd grade in my school I'm not teaching many of the skills taught & used on TEC. They already have those specific skills. I am busy teaching them other language reading skills. However I have used Book #2 the 'Easy Reader's Activity Book' with great success."

"I'd like to know in advance what skills are being covered. I can't just show a TV program with no purpose. The skills may be too far above or below my class."

"The programs are too long; 20 minutes would suit us better."

"I have used TEC in the past. I feel that it is very valuable especially in a special ed class. It presented the same vocabulary and phonics I do but in another way. It was 30 minutes well spent! However, my principal is against the use of TV in the classroom. He seems to be against TV in general and TEC had to be eliminated. While viewing TEC I noted an increase in students' sight vocabulary but without formalized, hard-core statistics it's a lost cause with some administrators."

"I had integrated TEC in my plans for my grade 1 & 2 assignment this year when that assignment was suddenly changed--two weeks after school started. I used TEC extensively the previous year and had intended even more integration this year. I will definitely return to it if my grade assignment changes."

"I only wish your programs were available for use in the classroom (TV is in gym room and music room)."

"Our TV is in a bad location and often doesn't work. When this program was on too many activities were going on around the set. If we were able to have a set in our room it would be very helpful to use TEC."

"Some of the humor is for the above average 2nd grader--but the skills are at a different level of learning."

"I teach deaf children who are behind in reading anywhere from 1 year to 7 years. At present, I am teaching primary children and TEC is too difficult for them to follow."

"TV sets in schools are notoriously out of order or in poor repair. When they are built into classrooms and never moved, teachers will use them more."

"Watching TV during school hours is frowned upon by the administration."

"It's really too bad schools aren't funded for TV so we can take advantage of programs."

"Our TV has been out of order all year."

"We don't have available to us when a particular show is being aired. We just have to turn on the TV and take 'pot luck.' This makes it hard to schedule certain shows that would be particularly good or to know what follow-up activities to be prepared for when the show is over."

"I have used TEC for 4 years. This year our scheduling just didn't work out. I was eager to use the materials and disappointed that things didn't 'work out.'"

"Would like to have TEC be shown again around 12:00 or 1:00."

"Phonics used is not pure. The [ə] is added to all consonants, thus distorting them. Example: the silhouette portion of the show (sounding out words) always adds a [ə] sound, such as [blə] + [o] = blow, [tə] + [o] = tow, etc."

"I have used TEC before with small groups of slow 5th grade readers. However, the TV schedule does not fit into my reading schedule this year. When I did use it I never knew what concept was being taught because I had no guide (cost) and because I could not watch and teach the 25 to 30 other students in my reading class."

"I have noted that (1) ITV is viewed as non-instructional, (2) some school administrators view TEC as 'amusement.' There is a need to articulate that learning can be fun."

"Curriculum heavily scheduled. Debate whether TV should be used as long as child can see at home. Principal who has extensive reading background discourages use in preference to teacher-directed material."

"Some may think it will become a 'babysitter' to have the children sit in front of a TV set."

"Our school has two TV sets--one in the library, the other in the lunch room. This causes a very limited schedule for 26 classes. Also, since my classes in remedial reading are small, and short periods, I don't believe I could force it."

"I would use TEC every day as part of my reading program if the T.V. were available to us."

"I think your program is excellent and would like to be able to use it with my group as we are below level (1 to 2 years, perhaps more in a few cases). However, we have no T.V. available that I can get my hands on or go to. I do suggest my kids view your program and use your dittos."

"The 12:30 show is hard for us to view since our lunch hour runs 12:00-1:00. Could you consider an earlier time in the A.M., perhaps 11:00? We have the show videotaped and watch it the next day."

"The principal frowns upon its use but second grade tries to use it as much as possible."

"TEC Activity Book is a little too difficult for my first graders at this time. I plan to use it towards the end of the school year after they have more skills in that area of the book."

## Additional Comments

About twenty respondents mentioned some aspect of the series or their experience with it which appeared not to fit into any of the categories used elsewhere in this report. The remarks include suggestions, requests, bouquets to CTW, and some personal reactions to the programs.

### Miscellaneous Comments Concerning TEC

"I use TEC with my son in the evening. We watch it together and I use the preview to introduce him to the letters and sounds being taught. I feel that TEC has helped me with my son's education. I feel his attention span has grown through TEC and Sesame Street. Even though I would work with my son anyway, I feel that it is just an added benefit."

"I wish TEC was televised during the early afternoon (1:00 to 1:30) or during the first part of the school day (8:30 to 9:00). Most of the teachers in my school think TEC is very valuable, enjoyable show. P.S. My sons watch it every day at home."

"I try to encourage my own 7-year-old to watch it at home! I know it has been successful in areas I have failed!"

"My students look forward to TEC daily. Most of them like to write the words down as they are flashed on the TV screen. The repetition on TEC and Sesame Street is what my EMH students need."

"I teach a Young Child course, and we plan to review and evaluate the segments that our A-V department has taped for us. The students who are high-school age and future mothers will have more insight into use of TV programs for their children."

"I have taught for many years, and really enjoy new ideas. No matter how I try though, I can't present a sound as 'attention getting' as your program. But, I find myself coming up with more ideas, creations, etc., not to compete, but hold interest of my students. Thanks for the program, as well as keeping me 'on my toes' at 46."

"I do wish we could obtain posters of some of the characters in the show. Bulletin materials would be good."

"I enjoy (and the children even more so) this program. It is fantastic. Children really learn. Very motivating."

"Many students I have, have talked about the show or commented on certain sounds they have seen on the show. They seem to enjoy watching it."

"I would like to have some supplementary materials which are on first grade level. I have the Activity Book 2--too difficult for first grade."

"The kids love the magic blackboard."

"Since I am a music specialist, my main interest in TEC is in regard to my 6-year-old son. I work on the songs from the shows with him (which I sometimes use in my music classes) and I have him watch the show as frequently as possible at home. If I were to know which episodes were coming in advance, I could do better preparation with him. We receive a good picture on Channel 22 from Annapolis, Md. He sometimes views TEC in his classroom, but more frequently Read-Along and Book, Look, & Listen since he is in kindergarten. I have purchased some TEC reading books printed in the Golden Book fashion from the local stores. I would like to know more of materials which are available. P.S.--Spiderman makes your show 'a must' to my child."

"I, personally, love TEC! I wish it had been on the air when I was a child. It is really too old for my class--they prefer Sesame Street. I particularly like the silhouettes that say the beginning and ending sounds."

"I have changed teaching positions from fourth grade (when I utilized TEC) to kindergarten (which I feel TEC is advanced, in addition to future utilization deeming it not necessary in my classroom). The fourth graders really enjoyed TEC last year although we only watched it on Tuesdays (occasionally additional periods). It was somewhat below a few gifted students, however. It is watched in my school from 1st through 5th grades. I think it's an excellent show and personally I don't even own a TV."

"I gave the kit to another teacher because I now teach only remedial math and have no TV in my room. I used TEC in my room for 3 years and it seemed like magic how it corresponded with our spelling lessons. Also--my own two children have actually learned to read above the average grade level (I believe) by watching TEC. Thanks for doing such a good job. P.S.--My 8-year-old's favorite song is the one where he says quiet-l-y and immediate-ly. It's a real funny song besides being educational."

"TEC is a fine program and one that should be continued on a regular basis. I only wish such a program could be developed in the area of mathematics, as well."

"Have you ever considered language arts segments for grades 4 and up that might be 5-15 minutes in length? Grammar is so tedious when it could be fun. I'm sure you could present so many skills entertainingly!"

"I would like for my children to have workbooks. Are any available?"

"I enjoy the program. I wish there was more repetition for several days after a show. One day is not really enough time for a child to pick up on the material shown. I wish there were duplicating masters to correspond or go along with each show. It would be fun, as well as a repetition activity to follow up what has been learned."

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The limitations of a single survey preclude making a definitive judgment about the effects of the magazine advertisements and the mailed TEC information kit. Because a period of seven to ten months elapsed between receipt of the kit and the survey questionnaire, many respondents might have found it hard to recall sequences of events accurately. It was not feasible to obtain data on TEC utilization during the same period by a comparable group of teachers who did not request or receive the kit; a comparison of utilization in matched groups of kit recipients and non-recipients would have provided a better basis for assessing the possible impact of the kit, but arranging such a comparison would have been both difficult and expensive.

Although the cost-effectiveness of the promotion is thus a matter of judgment, the advertisements and information kit appear to have been a good investment from several standpoints. Reactions to the items in the kit were quite favorable. A number of teachers reported using TEC for the first time, many indicated that they were making better use of the series in teaching reading or that they had used the classroom activities and curriculum goals presented in the Handbook, and some had ordered TEC supplementary materials.

The findings of the survey suggest that TEC utilization might be enhanced by several means, listed below in a tentative order of priority:

--Finding ways to provide more TV sets for classroom use and to keep available sets in good repair (possibly through legislation to fund additional support for ITV, or through revision of school budgets)

--Arranging more appropriate scheduling of the programs (perhaps based on surveys of teachers in various areas to determine their preferred broadcast times)

--Directing special efforts to school administrators (emphasizing the series' educational effectiveness and its acceptance by teachers)

--Developing a means of letting teachers know in advance what programs will be aired on given dates (ideally, through cooperative arrangements with local stations)

--Providing more information to teachers about the supplementary materials available for use with TEC (through convention exhibits, newsletters, advertisements in magazines directed to teachers, etc.)

--Distributing testimonials from satisfied users (such as the comments volunteered by many teachers in this survey) to current non-users

--Obtaining objective data regarding the amount of class time spent on reading by users vs. non-users, and (if favorable to TEC) circulating such data to prospective users of the series

Several of these recommendations closely parallel others proposed in previous reports. They are included here because the data from the survey provide additional evidence regarding their potential value.